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DEUTSCHE MORGENLÄNDISCHE GESELLSCHAFT
IN KOMMISSION BEI F. A. BROCKHAUS



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Isaac of Antioch.

Homily on the Royal City.

By C. Moss.

II.

Translation.

Again offer up praise to the power which delivered thee from the sword — again give thanks to the cross that it may again fence in thy breaches. Again let thy harp play to it 5 for again thou seekest its help — thou hast need of God, cease not from the praise of him. Linger in hymns to him who increaseth thee through peace and give thanks to him who without strife gave thee great deliverance. He did not wear away thy strength in war — thou didst not see the faces of the 10 pursuers — by means of sickness he conquered the tyrant who was threatening to come and take thee away captive. Against the stone of sickness they stumbled and the steeds fell and their riders — and the camp which was prepared for thy destruction [lit: razing to the ground] was silenced. (10) Peace 15 was an officer for thee, and grace bore rule over thee — and he commanded peace that it should increase thee, and that the foreigner should not come upon thee. With the feeble rod of sickness he smote mighty men and laid them low — and fierceness could not stand before the feebleness which struck 20 at it. With a mean and weak staff he bound for thee the warlike forces — the swift ones sought their feet but sickness weighed them down. The horse came to nought, the horsemen came to nought, and the arms and the assault came to nought

— for sickness of the foot¹⁾ had laid low the mighty men that they might not come upon thee.

With the staff he was smiting Philistia that she might not behave haughtily against the people — (20) and with the locust Egypt was punished and was restrained from the daughter of Jacob. By means of feeble rods thy Redeemer humbled the bands of mighty men and through sickness he laid low the Huns who threatened thee. In the course of this mighty act which helped thee, he did not strive with his arm; he did not fight with bow and sword; he did not weary his strength in war. By his fiat he stilled the battles; by his will he caused the sword to cease — and his protection is a high wall and mighty men cannot break through it.

O city, redeemed by compassion, produce fruits of righteousness, that thy redeemer may not be called a respecter of persons because he protected thee. Produce fruits of faith that his justice may not strive with him (saying): (30) "Lands which did injustice are desolate, whereas thou, although thou dost sin, art prosperous". Formerly his justice strove with him on behalf of evil-doers, and his grace debated with her in the person of the nations [i. e. the heathen nations] and of the nation [the Jewish people]. Justice assumed the person [lit: put on the face] of the nations and stood before him when he [i. e. God] was upholding the worthless people, and the nations were cast out by him from his dwelling. "Why", she said, "are the nations rejected, but the nation is become one near to thee? Why is thy grace accused on earth of respect of persons? If it be that thou dost establish justice [on earth], cast out the nation which acts wickedly against thee — if thou doest grace, let the nations come into thine inheritance. Godless are the nations, godless is the nation — in error they are equal and in iniquity (40) — and wherefore dost thou gather in the nation whereas the family of the nations is a stranger to thee? Either let the nations come into thy

1) Or possibly: for sickness had laid low the mighty men of the foot. Or should we read *וְיָסַדְתָּ לָהֶם* and translate: for sickness had laid low the foot of the mighty men?

habitation or do not gather in even the nation — and if thou art good with reference to the inner ones [initiates, i. e. Jews], wherefore dost thou reject the race of the outer ones [the profane, i. e. the heathen]? (If) thou seekest to wax great through justice (then) thou wilt scatter the nation of Jacob — 5 (if) thou dost wish to shine forth through grace (then) thou wilt call the nations to thy assembly. (If) justice is pleasing to thee, dismiss Israel from thy house — and if thou dost choose grace, seek the peoples in thy calling. Why dost thou uphold Zion whereas the assembly of the nations is forsaken 10 by thee? The harlot enters before thee — why may the daughter of the nations not enter? The nations are rejected by mercy while thou dost hold fast the stubborn nation — (50) call the family of the nations with the calling of thy grace that it may give thanks to thee". This petition justice 15 brought in before God — this controversy she had had, and she brought the nations into the inheritance. She assumed this advocacy¹⁾ and extended mercy to every man — and she sent heralds to the nations [that] they might invite them to the kingdom. Through this speech the Godhead turned towards 20 the nations and graciously called them, that they might come in and do service — through this reasoning the indignation against the nations was dissolved because God went forth and proclaimed peace to them [or saluted them], and perfected a reconciliation. Through this discourse the Church was com- 25 manded to come into the sanctuary — (60) through this petition the bride came to the bridegroom from the nations. Justice could not bear to see the insolent nation accounted the heir of majesty while the nations were forsaken [as] rejected ones. "Far be it from thee", she said, "to be a respecter of persons! 30 — far be it from thee to be like unto a mortal man! — in the upright judgement which thou lovest thou owest the nations compassion. The nations make supplication to thee — let them enter [and] minister to thy majesty — through thy grace the earth abides but it does not perceive that thou 35 givest it life. Thou leadest it astray from thy way because


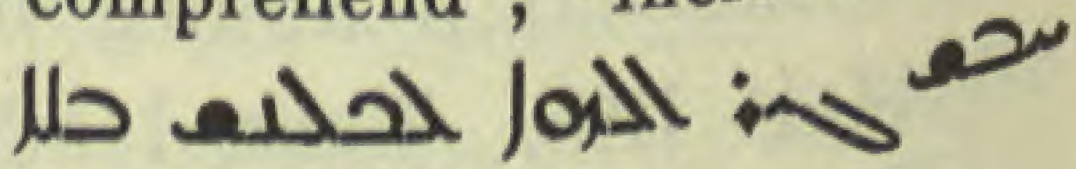
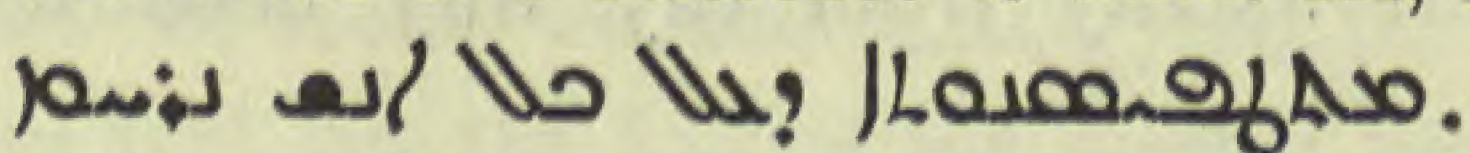
1) *συνήγορία*.

thou dost not visit it with thy laws — and because thou didst not call it together with the nation, it did not know thee that thou art God. Set the law over the nations that they may learn that thou hast created them — (70) and instruct
 5 the peoples in thy judgements, and let the earth know that thou art its Lord. Thou didst alienate it and it forgot thee and thou didst put it far from thee and it did not honour thee — call it [that] it may enter and recognise that thou art the Lord of the Creation”.

10 This controversy of justice's the Blessed Paul declared while he was teaching the Romans, while he was saluting [lit: while he was proclaiming peace to] the nations. He opened the gate of God which Moses had shut before the nations — he opened for the Church that it might enter that
 15 which the Law had not opened for it. He went forth and repeated before the nations how justice had disputed — that she had taken the sins of the nation and had entered that it might be established over the nations. Paul narrated how justice had arisen [and] striven and (80) [how] through the
 20 crimes of the inner ones she had demanded mercy for the outer ones. Through the fall¹⁾ of the foolish nation she effected an entrance for the nations, and through its going astray after images she proclaimed return to the nations. “Because they did not obey”, she said, “God has mercy on you and through
 25 the sins of the Hebrews you have found an opportunity for mercy. Their falling away from justice has brought about a reconciliation for the world — their sins are life for the nations — because of their jealousy they were justified²⁾”. God shut them up, but He saw that they did not obey³⁾ —
 30 and He pursued them with doctrine, but they did not come to faith. He instructed them with wondrous things but they

1) i. e. falling into sin; calamity.

2) i. e. because of the jealousy of the Jews against the nations they (the nations) were justified. Cf. *Rom.* XI, 11.

3) Perhaps  has the sense of “comprehend”, “include” here and there is a reference to *Rom.* XI, 32. 
.

did not forsake falsehood — (90) He caught them in iniquity every day but they did not abandon idle speech. He imprisoned them in true judgement and He tested them for a long time — He troubled [them] and terrified [them] and He saw them that they were vessels of destruction¹⁾. With the proving 5 of his judgement he searched them out and found that there was no affinity to him in them. He taught them by prophets, he called them by means of laws — he admonished them with signs but they did not abandon idolatry. And his justice judged truly²⁾ that she might have mercy on every man. 10 Justice against which they had rebelled was become their adversary — she disputed in order that the nations might enter and trample the rebels under foot. Justice saw that grace was accused of respect of persons (100) because it gave rest to the godless nation — and the godless nations hated it. It 15 magnified the worshippers of idols and it treated with contempt the worshippers of idols — error lies in wait among the inner ones a hundred-fold more than among the outer ones. And she judged it right in upright judgement that mercy should be extended over all and she withdrew mercy from the nation and 20 granted grace to every man³⁾. “It is not just”, she said, “that evil-doers are written in the book of thy covenant whilst other evil-doers are estranged from the testament of thy promise”. This one [sc. justice] incited the multitude of the nations against the nation and humbled it — this one separated 25 it from the house concerning which it boasted that it belonged to it. This one called the nations and they pushed aside the nation and cast it forth from its habitation — (110) and love, which formerly gave heed to it, abated from it. This one repeated the wickedness of the nation which was more grievous 30 than that of the nations — and she gave help to the foreigners and made them members of the household. And Paul listened to her, while she was debating this question, and he entered and told the Romans that their calling was from [or of] justice

1) Cf. Rom. IX, 22.

2) As if *ἡ ἀδικία*.

3) Or: dealt kindly with every man.

— which stood by them and debated and saved them and caused God to show mercy to the tribes.

O city, fear justice, because she does not know respect of persons — for she did not know [how] to respect even the
 5 person of God in judgement. When the erring nation was beloved¹⁾ she debated with him and persuaded him (120) that he should show mercy even to the nations and should call them to the faith. Be afraid of justice because iniquity cannot stand before her — may she not punish thee in the land of
 10 desolation²⁾ because thou art at peace although thou art insolent. Force and pride have built thee up and they have made thee the envied one among the nations — tyranny has heaped up in thee its plunder and has incited against thee the desire of marauding bands. The Hun desired thy property
 15 and from desire he changed to wrath — his desire was transformed into anger and it roused³⁾ him to war and sword. The greedy one mingled desire with wrath and dared to come against the city — for this is the character of plunderers that from desire they come to quarrel. Greedy men cause every-
 20 thing that is upright [to become a matter of] contention and strife — (130) take away greed from the earth and lo! everything is at peace. O riches, how [is it that] of thyself thou dost incite the nations against one another? — O property, how [is it that] of thyself thou art the cause of strife? The
 25 rich deliver the land into captivity and incite plunderers against them [selves] — they are the cause of captivity through the superabundance of their possessions. The poor man gives peace to the earth because the bandit does not come against him — the rich man is the cause of the sword because he

1) Or, taking *as active* ptc. “when he (God) loved the erring people”.

2) *desolatio, vastitas* (desolation). Another possible translation of *is, of course, “in the land of the sword”*. appears to mean “castigavit”, „punivit” here. Mr. E. W. Brooks suggests that the *= “by means of”*; trans. then: “may she not punish thee by means of a desolate land. (i. e., “May she not condemn thee to a desolate land — a land of desolation.)

3) Lit: forged.

shakes the earth with battle. The foreigner threatens him — the captor seeks his treasures — through his boasting he entices troops so that they come to depopulate the lands.

Adam had lived in Paradise and had been envied by the Evil One — (140) the powers¹⁾ of darkness were jealous of 5 him, demons were agitated because of his riches. The captors plotted against him in the desirable dwelling-place [in] which they saw him — they armed the serpent with guile that he might come and take the rich ones captive. He [the Evil one] took the tongue of the serpent that he might speak false- 10 hood with it — he made for him [sc. the serpent — or, for himself] a ravenous [or baneful] mouth that he might make a deadly lure with it²⁾ — the harp was worthy of the will which played on it³⁾. The cunning one [i. e., the Evil one] took the wily one [i. e. the serpent] that he might cause 15 slander⁴⁾ through him — he sent forth his guile through the serpent and his envy through falsehood. From the ambassador which he made for himself understand the guile which was in him — an ambush walked [or (freely) lurked] in kindness and a 20 snare was prepared in the lure [or bait] — (150) the deceitful one made sweet his story that innocence might give ear to it⁵⁾.

The Hun also in the midst of the field heard [about] thy majesty and envied thee — and thy riches kindled in him the desire to come for the plundering of thy treasures. He called and gathered together the beast(s) of the field, the host of 25 the desert drew nigh to him⁶⁾ — and he led the band of the desert⁷⁾ that he might bring the land into captivity. "Let

1) Reading *ܡܠܟܐ* for *ܡܬܐ* (life).

2) Lit: that with it (sc. the mouth) he might allure a deadly lure.

3) *Three* lines together (not two).

4) So if *ܡܠܟܐ*. But if *ܡܠܟܐ* = "that he might make an attack".

5) *Three* lines together — not two.

6) *ܡܠܟܐ* also transitive = cause to cleave, join, bring near. So "he caused the host . . . to cleave to him" — "he brought near him . . .".

7) *ܡܠܟܐ* can hardly mean: "and he led the band to the desert". Trans. as if *ܡܠܟܐ* "of the desert" or even *ܡܠܟܐ* from the desert.

us go", he said, "[and] plunder the land in which peace has made riches to abound — let us go against the great city whose treasures foreigners have not plundered. Let us go, let us capture the town in which the whole earth is gathered
 5 together — and as it were in a nest and in a cage let us take all the nations in it. Let us go to the wonderful city which long peace has made great (160) and it [sc. peace] took and brought to it in honour¹⁾ all the treasures of the lands. The besom of plunder [is] in its [sc. the city's] hand and it
 10 has gathered together with it all the gold of the Persians and of the Romans — merchants have gone up and have heaped up in it . . . The riches of the sea and of the dry land sailors have dragged and have heaped up in it²⁾ — all the earth is there, let us arise quickly [and] go to it. Violence and its
 15 companion might have spoiled towns and have placed [the spoils³⁾] in it — and oppression and guilt together with it have given it all that is in the earth". These things the tyrant had spoken — the Hun to his camp — these things the robber said that he might inflame his troops with desire. He
 20 had girt his loins with troops that he might go forth, capture [and] devastate — (170) the terrible one armed himself with marauding bands and the iniquitous one was on the point of coming. He hung [or, the sword hung, reading 𐭪𐭣] the sword from his right hand and the half of the sword [was] in his
 25 left hand — and he had laid his hand on the bow and tested it with the arrow which he sent [forth] through it.

But when the sinners drew the bow and put their arrows


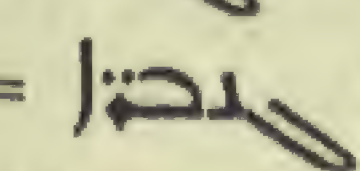
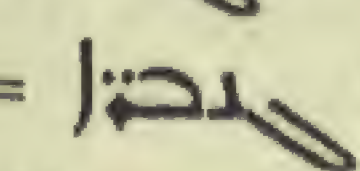
1) Or 𐭪𐭣𐭥 = a mark of honour, gift. So, perhaps, "as a gift".

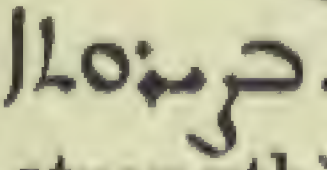
2) The text seems to be corrupt (or deficient) here. If we trans. "merchants of the Persians and of the Romans have gone up and have heaped up in it the riches of the sea and of the dry land", then the last half-line: "sailors have dragged and have heaped up in it" is left without an object — while if we translate as above, the half-line "merchants have gone up and have heaped up in it" has no real object.

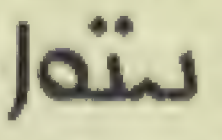
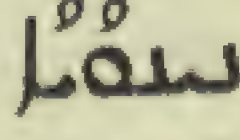
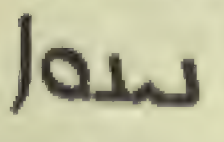
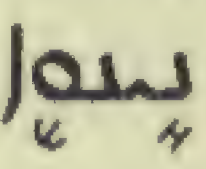

3) To preserve the metre (and the sense) we should, perhaps, read 𐭪𐭣𐭥𐭥 [or 𐭪𐭣𐭥𐭥] instead of 𐭪𐭣𐭥 . 𐭪𐭣𐭥 "have blinded" gives no sense.

on the string — and preparation had perfected itself and the host was on the point of coming quickly — while menace was coming with them and wrath was stirring up strife — then sickness blew through it and hurled the host into the wilderness. The lover of peace had sent sickness like a commander ⁵ against the host which was threatening in order that peace might come and bring it to nought. It [sc. sickness] took strength from the strong and made feeble the knees of the warriors¹). — (180) it slackened and turned aside the hands which had grasped the bow and the sword. It cooled the ¹⁰ fury of the mighty man, it abated the threat of the powerful ones — it brought to nought the counsel of the wise, it weakened the heart of the bold. He whose heart was strong for battle waxed feeble through sickness — he whose spirit was proud [exalted] on account of strength was humbled through fewness²). ¹⁵ He who was skilful in shooting with the bow, sickness of the bowels overthrew him — the riders of the steeds slumbered and slept and the cruel army was silenced. The assembled army in which the Hun had boasted fell suddenly — as had happened to the army of Assyria when it was threatening Zion. ²⁰

Formerly Sennacherib had girt his loins with the army of Assyria — (190) he trusted in the multitudes and bands of the Ninevites and of the Assyrians. He went forth from the rising of the sun that he might raze to the ground the cities of the West — he took with him the young men of ²⁵ Assyria, the youths of Nineveh³) clave to him. He went up and encamped against Judaea and he did not think on [his] weakness — because his trust was in the army he behaved

1)  on account of the metre should probably be vocalised  =  "warriors".

2) . Does this mean "insignificance" (= sickness), scarcity (i. e. of strength)?

3) Text  with seyâmê but  = a Ninevite — there is no form  = an inhabitant of Nineveh. I would suggest therefore that the seyâmê should be removed and that we should read  Nineveh (cf. parallel  Assyria).

insolently and was unrestrained. Then a wind from the height
blew through his army and scattered it — and the warriors
slept their sleep, the mighty men whom he had prepared. He
was deprived of the youths and the army of his trust [= in
5 which he trusted] fell — and he who had come up with threat(s)
returned to his land in flight. The senseless¹⁾ and insolent
man does not understand his limitations²⁾ — (200) he supposes
concerning difficult things that they are not difficult for him
nor hard. He thinks that he can anticipate³⁾ hidden and
10 secret things — and he takes little thought of hard concealed
things. For this is the proof of a fool (viz.) that he perplexes
himself with difficult things and [that] he wearies his empty
mind with things which are too high for [his] understanding.

Lo! the tumult of battles has died away; let the strife
15 of the disputants cease — lo! the war with the foreigners has
come to an end, let the speech of strife come to an end. Faith
and the city are afflicted as it were with battles — the battle
of the city has passed away [is over] but that of faith has
waxed powerful. Warriors do not vex the land, inquirers
20 [i. e. heretics] stir up the Church — (210) the tongue has
surpassed the sword because it does not cease from strife. We
have received earthly peace, let us hope for heavenly peace
— we have peace from him who is without, obtain agreement
with him who is within. Troublers have ceased from the
25 city and the voice which saddened it has come to an end —
let the disputants who disturb it cease from discussing faith.
We have a city, faith — there is no man who fights against
his own city — a foreigner disturbs a city and an unbeliever
faith. A pupil tells his skill through work — and by [his]
30 act he shows it and glories in it because he knows it. The

1) ܠܐ ܕܡܝܢ evidently = ܠܐ ܕܡܝܢ here, ܠܐ having the meaning "mind".

2) Lit: "his measures", cf. ܕܡܥܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܢ ܕܡܝܢ "things which are beyond one".

3) Perhaps ܕܡܝܢ here = rise early [and understand]. Trans. then: "that he can easily understand".

pupil does not fully¹⁾ expound his skill — (220) he labours in works that he may make known that he has a knowledge of it²⁾. Disputants tell faith without works — they narrate it through empty and base speech instead of deeds.

Thou, O Lord, didst deliver the city from disturbers and 5 troublers — deliver the faith from the disputants [i. e. heretics] even of our time³⁾. Thou didst cause war to cease from the land and thou didst permit us to eat its [sc. the lands] delights — banish quarrels from the Church and allow us to live in its doctrine. That, since the land dwells in peace and faith 10 in serenity, the soul, O Lord, may give [or, play] thanks to thee on a harp of praise.

Notes on the text.

1. 82. ܦܢܐ in the sense of “return” occurs, apart from our Homily, only in the Syriac version of Cant. VII, 11, where 15 ܐܢܝ ܠܕܘܕܝ ܘܥܠܝ ܬܫܘܩܬܐ is rendered ܦܢܐ ܫܡܝܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ. PAYNE-SMITH (*Thesaurus*) explains our word as meaning “regressus, conversio” = Studium. BROCKELMANN in his *Lexicon* gives “applicatio” for it. ܦܢܐ appears to me to be the rendering not of the Hebr. ܬܫܘܩܐ but of the LXX ἐπιστροφή. The 20 versions seem not to have understood the rare Hebr. noun and to have substituted ܬܫܘܒܐ for it. Cf. the two other passages in which ܬܫܘܩܐ occurs in the Bible. Gen. 3, 16 ܘܐܠ ܘܐܠܝܚ ܬܫܘܩܬܐ = Pesh. ܘܐܠܝܚ ܬܫܘܩܬܐ = Pesh. ܘܐܠܝܚ ܬܫܘܩܬܐ. Though in these two passages the 25 Pesh. renders the Hebr. noun by the verb ܬܫܘܩܐ, the LXX has in both instances the noun ἀποστροφή.

1. 119. ܐܡܝܢܐ. From a philological point of view this is perhaps the most interesting form in the Homily. Though

1) Perhaps we should read ܡܠܠܐ “verbally”, “merely by words”, for ܡܠܠܐ “fully”. 2) Lit: that it is with him in knowledge.

3) ܡܝܢܐ (sic MS. with seyâmê). No root ܡܝܢ in PAYNE SMITH, *Thesaurus* and BROCKELMANN, *Lexicon* (Ed. alt.); so the word must be read ܡܝܢܐ.

the Aphel of פוּעו (a loan word from the Greek *πείσαι*) occurs frequently enough in the sense “persuade”, “convince”, the Pael has, so far as I know, never yet been found outside this Homily — it is not even recorded in the Lexica. The Jewish
 5 Aramaic and Post-Biblical Hebrew פייס both mean “pacify, conciliate, persuade”, but פייס has always been considered an original Semitic root and not a borrowed Greek form. (See LEVY, *Neuhebr. and Chald. Wörterbuch* s. v. פייס.)

l. 158. מלסל. According to BROCKELMANN (*Lexicon*,
 10 s. v. מלסל) this is a loan word from the Greek *κλωβίον* (see NÖLDEKE, ZDMG. 35, p. 517, note 5). PAYNE-SMITH (*Thesaurus*, col. 3624) considers our word a derivative of the Greek *κλουβός*, *κλωβός*. GESENIUS-BUHL s. v. כלוב however maintains that these Greek words are borrowed from the Hebrew כלוב.
 15 LIDDELL and SCOTT (*Greek-English Lexicon*) s. v. *κλωβός*, also compare the Hebrew word.

l. 185. חַעְבִּי מַעַל. BROCKELMANN explains the form חַעְבִּי as meaning “teli jactus”. According to PAYNE-SMITH, *Thesaurus* חַעְבִּי in such combinations is the Aphel ptc. used
 20 as a noun (he compares other similar forms such as חַסִּל, חַסִּלָּה). The peculiar form of the construct state as exemplified in חַעְבִּי is recorded by BROCKELMANN as occurring in the Hexaplar חַעְבִּי מַעַל = חַעְבִּי מַעַל = חַעְבִּי מַעַל. In our passage the meaning of this expression seems to be not “a bow shot” but “shooting
 25 with the bow”.

l. 191. Note that in this line both חַעְבִּי and חַעְבִּי are trisyllabic.

l. 205. חַלָּה (BROCKELMANN “certamen”) seems to occur, but once outside this passage, namely in another of Isaac's
 30 Homilies (BICKELL's Edition, Vol. 2, p. 26 where BICKELL renders it by “lis”). It is, however, recorded in the native Lexica.

1) See Bar-Hebraeus, Scholia ad. loc. (L. UHRY, *Die Scholien des Gregorius Abulfarag zur Genesis* 21—50, 1898), p. 1.

